

MARCH 2, 1976.

THE QUESTION OF SOVIET NUCLEAR INTENTIONS

ANNCR: CONGRESS LAST WEEK HEARD TESTIMONY WHICH SERIOUSLY RAISED THE QUESTION OF SOVIET INTENTIONS IN THE NUCLEAR ARMS FIELD. VOA NEWS ANALYST JOHN ALBERT HAS THESE OBSERVATIONS:

VOICE: IN HIS OPENING SPEECH AT THE TWENTY-FIFTH PARTY CONGRESS, GENERAL SECRETARY BREZHNEV CHARACTERIZED AS "MYTH" ALL WESTERN CONTENTIONS THAT THE CONTINUED SOVIET MILITARY, AND PARTICULARLY NUCLEAR ARMS, BUILDUP THREATENS ANYONE. AND OTHER SOVIET SPOKESMEN HAVE POINTED TO THE PROPOSED INCREASE IN THE AMERICAN DEFENSE BUDGET AS PROOF OF AN AMERICAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE ARMS RACE.

HOWEVER, ALMOST EVERY WEEK NEW FACTS ABOUT THE EXTENT OF SOVIET SPENDING FOR ARMAMENT ARE WIDELY REPORTED. IN TESTIMONY ON THE U.S. DEFENSE BUDGET LAST WEEK, THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, DR. MALCOLM CURRIE POINTED OUT THAT THE SOVIET UNION NOW IS A GLOBAL MILITARY POWER WITH WHAT HE CALLED "A GLOBAL COMMAND AND CONTROL SECOND TO NONE." AND DR. CURRIE RAISED THE QUESTION WHETHER MOSCOW IS REALLY SATISFIED WITH PARITY IN THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS FIELD WITH THE UNITED STATES. IT APPEARS, HE SAID, THAT SOVIET DOCTRINE IS TO SURPASS THE UNITED STATES IN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY, PARTICULARLY MILITARY TECHNOLOGY. AS HIS PERSONAL BELIEF, RATHER THAN A CONCLUSION OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, THE ASSISTANT DEFENSE SECRETARY ADDED THAT UNLIKE THE UNITED STATES, MOSCOW MAY NOT FULLY EXCLUDE STRATEGIC NUCLEAR WAR FROM ITS PLANNING AS UNTHINKABLE. THIS DOES NOT MEAN, DR. CURRIE SAID, THAT MOSCOW ACTUALLY WOULD PLAN FOR NUCLEAR WAR. BUT IT MIGHT NOT HESITATE IN A CERTAIN SITUATION TO USE THE THREAT OF WAR TO SEEK POLITICAL GOALS, PROVIDED IT REGARDED ITS FORCES AS SUPERIOR TO THOSE OF THE UNITED STATES.

SECRETARY OF STATE KISSINGER ALSO HAS ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE SOVIET UNION'S MILITARY EXPENDITURES EXCEED THOSE OF THE UNITED STATES. AND HE SAYS THAT MOSCOW HAS BEGUN TO DEFINE ITS INTERESTS AND OBJECTIVES IN GLOBAL TERMS. MISTER KISSINGER SAID THAT IN STRATEGIC MILITARY TERMS, THE SOVIET UNION HAS ACHIEVED A BROAD EQUALITY WITH THE UNITED STATES. THIS, HE SAYS, WAS INEVITABLE "FOR A LARGE NATION WHOSE RULERS WERE PREPARED TO IMPOSE GREAT SACRIFICES ON THEIR PEOPLE" AND TO GIVE MOST RESOURCES TO INCREASE MILITARY STRENGTH.

AMERICAN POLICY IN THE NUCLEAR AGE, SAID THE SECRETARY, INVOLVES THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CONTAINING SOVIET POWER WITHOUT GLOBAL WAR. AND THIS REQUIRES THE UNITED STATES TO FOLLOW A DELICATE AND COMPLEX POLICY WHICH AVOIDS BOTH ABDICATION OF RESPONSIBILITY AS WELL AS UNNECESSARY CONFRONTATION.

DOCTOR CURRIE ALSO SAID THERE IS NO NEED FOR A "PANIC RESPONSE" BY THE UNITED STATES. HE CALLED INSTEAD FOR A WELL-PLANNED, FIVE-YEAR PROGRAM OF MODEST EXPANSION IN AMERICAN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT. THIS, HE STRESSED, IS PROVIDED FOR IN THE NEW DEFENSE BUDGET NOW BEFORE CONGRESS. ONLY IF THE UNITED STATES WERE TO STAND IDLY BY COULD THE SOVIET UNION ACQUIRE NUCLEAR SUPERIORITY BY THE 1980S.

IT IS THIS LONG-RANGE THREAT FROM THE PACE OF SOVIET ARMAMENT, WHICH IS LARGELY HIDDEN IN THE SOVIET BUDGET AND HARDLY SHOWS UP IN THE OFFICIAL SPENDING FIGURES, THAT THE INCREASED AMERICAN DEFENSE BUDGET IS DESIGNED TO MEET, AND UNDER THE WEIGHT OF EVIDENCE FROM MANY OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE SOURCES -- IN THE UNITED STATES, WITHIN NATO AND IN VARIOUS WESTERN COUNTRIES CONCERNED WITH STRATEGIC STUDIES -- MORE AND MORE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS ARE

BECOMING CONVINCED THAT AMERICAN DEFENSE EXPENDITURES MUST BE INCREASED RATHER THAN DECREASED, IF THE UNITED STATES IS TO AVOID FALLING INTO SECOND PLACE AS A NUCLEAR POWER.